

HARRY MOORE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF CEA

At the 22nd Annual Meeting of The College English Association, Harry T. Moore succeeded Donald Lloyd as president. Dr. Moore is Research Professor at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, and is well known for his scholarly publications.



President Harry T. Moore, Research Professor at Southern Illinois University

As a specialist in 20th century fiction, Professor Moore has done extensive work on D. H. Lawrence. Notable are his *The Life and Works of D. H. Lawrence* (1951), *The Intelligent Heart* (1955), and *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany* (1959). With Frederick J. Hoffman he edited *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence* in 1953. Forthcoming is *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, 2 vols.

Professor Moore is also a frequent contributor to the *New Republic*, *Saturday Review*, *Kenyon Review* as well as reviewer for the *New York Times Book Review*.

His teaching career has taken him to Illinois Tech., Northwestern, and the Air University. With the U. S. Air Force, Prof. Moore rose to his present reserve rank of Lt. Colonel. Before going to Southern Illinois, he was Chairman of History and Literature at Babson Institute. In demand as a visiting lecturer, he spent last summer at the University of Colorado and will be Visiting Professor at Columbia and New York Universities in 1961.

Among other honors, Prof. Moore was Guggenheim Fellow in 1958 and 1960 and has been a member of the Royal Society of Literature (London) since 1952.

English for the Educable Cretin

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article takes us inside the heads of those on the other side of the desk — the students about whom we confess in candid moments we know so little. It was elicited by a professor at Fordham University, who in submitting it, wrote as follows:

Sir:

Possibly because of my collar (perhaps also because of my own Latin background) I have always drawn one of our AB sections as my lot among Freshmen. There are distinct advantages talking about literature to 30 youngsters who are at the same time up to their ears in Latin and Greek. So that this year when I drew my first group of non-Latin students (called in the local argot "Sash" majors) I wondered what they would be like. At an informal seminar during the summer, I mentioned my doubts to one of the Seniors in the group. I must have asked him something like, "How do you get at these kids?" He said he had some ideas on the subject and that he would think it over and let me know. The enclosed paper is his answer.

TIMOTHY S. HEALY, S.J.

In addition to the avoidance of sudden movement, the teacher given the task of educating the ordinary high school student in the complexities of English literature must understand his audience. The student who flounders into his first college English class after four years of less than mediocre training in his native literature is a sorry specimen. In high school, English classes are conducted almost entirely from a single book—usually an asinine and completely shallow run-through of the world's literature with no reference to movements, trends, literary devices.

The course which I received in high school could most correctly be classified as advanced reading. I remember reading *Treasure Island*, *Macbeth*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Merchant of Venice*, some "nothing" poems such as Poe's "Bells," and "Tintern Abbey, and oh yes "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." (I remember this one because it seemed strange to spell "jail" that way.) I remember names like Sir John Suckling, Dante Rossetti, Beowulf, and John Masefield; but I could not connect them with anything, nor could I remember achieving any over-all pictures of the movement of literature or ever being given any reason why someone chose to write a certain way or, for that matter, to write at all. I remember being frequently bored, and only a few unconnected scenes from high school literature come to mind as particularly intriguing: I remember Ben Gunn whining around in the foliage about cheese; I remember a knife fight in *Treasure Island* at the top of a yardarm (and this only because the knives were identified as "dirks," and I found that interesting); I remember the witches of *Macbeth*; I remember Beowulf tearing up a banquet hall although I don't remember why he felt so put out; I remember the ancient

mariner vaguely with the albatross impending from his neck; and I remember considerable mirth being occasioned upon encountering the aforementioned Sir John Suckling. When I entered my first college English class I had never heard of James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Chaucer, T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, William Faulkner, John Donne, Thomas Hardy, Gertrude Stein . . . you name it, I hadn't heard of it.

This is at once a sad story and an exciting prospect. I can't really put my finger on what saved me from being a completely lost soul, but I can remember being shaken up by several things. In addition to being completely ill-prepared for college English, I was also pretty well settled and indoctrinated in a small world which admitted of no great controversy, held that certain subjects, personages and four-letter words were either sacred or not to be treated formally, and permitted little freedom of thought. Literature, to me, went no deeper than the surface machinery of an unfolding plot; and emotion, at that time, went no deeper than feeling slighted at something that someone had said.

I remember being shocked out of all this by several stories and several authors. There was a story from *Dubliners* that seemed thoroughly pointless after I'd read it. I can't remember the name of the particular story, but since any story from *Dubliners* would have seemed pointless, it doesn't matter. My professor explained the point of it all, and I remember mentally screaming, "AHA!" I probably also recognized certain elements of myself in the character depicted. The story was the one about the little old lady who works all day in a sweat-shop of some kind and is terribly ugly and is always being teased by her compatriots about getting married. Joyce makes her slightly appealing to catch you in the beginning and slowly reveals the shallowness and greyness of her existence until you are sick of hearing about her puttering around the street of Dublin. He places particular emphasis in the story upon the word "nice." This little old lady thinks everything is "nice," and I remember suddenly realizing after the story was explained that I thought quite a few things were "nice" also.

Another story that grabbed me was called *Things*, by D. H. Lawrence. It was a satire on "thing" conscious people and it really shook me because I was very "thing" conscious at the time. I had just erupted violently from several years of teen-age, television-type living and I was thoroughly oriented towards the unpaid-for station wagon, the little white house in the sub-

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THE CEA CRITIC

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ASSEMBLY LINE TEXTS

Most of us in the CEA are only consumers in the text book complex; still we may note with interest and not a little concern the recent discovery of the textbook publishers by the big money boys. When textbook sales in 1959 totaled \$326 million and in 1960 will be higher, Wall Street took notice. And Wall Street also believes that textbook publishing today is a depression- and recession-proof industry. Thus publishers have recently found themselves big news in the financial pages of the press. Mergers and public sale of stock previously held by private families have been the two industry trends.

Crowell-Collier acquired a controlling interest in the Macmillan Company. Random

House acquired the L. W. Singer Company and Knopf. Harcourt, Brace put its stock on the open market and also acquired World Book in a stock-exchange arrangement. The Meredith Publishing Co., publisher of *Better Homes and Gardens*, announced it would acquire Appleton-Century-Crofts. The action that started the financial ferment was the merger of Henry Holt & Co., John C. Winston, and Rinehart & Co., into the \$35,000,000 giant of Holt, Winston and Rinehart.

Meanwhile, Scott, Foresman and Ginn, two concerns hitherto controlled by private families, announced that their stock is now in the public market.

In an era when the big become bigger and the small disappear, the publishing house that was the shadow of a man was perhaps doomed. But humanists mourn the passing. And humanists rise up to resist the trend that dehumanizes textbooks. For at their best—and who would want the less than best—texts are the blood and brain of a superior teacher who is using the printed page to enlarge his potential sphere of influence.

But the text that increasingly crosses our desk is the automated product of an assembly line. A team of authors works under a team of editors. This double team plays it cool and the result is pretty cold porridge. It is no doubt nourishing, it is certainly bland, but it is hardly a stimulant.

What are your own experiences with textbook writing or textbook using? The pages of *The CEA Critic* are open to your comments.

THE SCIENTIFIC SIXTIES

While teachers of English gathered in the overheated halls and overcrowded corridors of the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, their scientist colleagues listened in New York City to the sober words of Alan T. Waterman, director of the National Science Foundation (For a report, see *NY Times*, December 30, 1960, pp. 1 and 6).

Dr. Waterman stated that we stand at the threshold of a decade dominated by science as no era has been since the time of Sir Isaac Newton. And while Newton eventually evoked the Muse, we wonder if those of us concerned with the Humanities will face the challenge of the Scientific Sixties, or whether we will continue to do "more of the same."

The distance from New York's sessions of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Philadelphia's MLA was more than a geographical 100 miles. The intellectual chasm was so wide as to be appalling. Historical and textual studies were our major concerns: with the one we could keep our eyes focused backward and with the other, downward. Thus we didn't have to look around. If we had, we might have sensed a few small indicators of the future even amid the 1904-built walls of the Bellevue Stratford.

For one thing, the exhibitions gave larger space than ever to electronic wonders for the classroom. But while our foreign language colleagues stopped at least to dream of language laboratories, we in English drifted by to pause among the paperbacks.

For another, those of us who made our way to the CEA open meeting in the South Garden heard a warning in the words of John Ball. Referring to major scientific breakthroughs in human knowledge, Dr. Ball told us that the time is already here when we cannot afford to ignore the related scholarship in areas of social studies, psychology, learning theory, linguistics. We must set our sights on the points of intersection between disciplines if we are to keep our own discipline vital.

In short, the Humanities face an ever greater challenge in the decade of the Sixties. If we are the men we say we are, if our discipline is as broad as we like to claim, if we are wise in the ways of creativity, then we will heed the words of Alan Waterman and of John Ball. We will demonstrate in our lives and thoughts—published in our teaching—the relevance of the Humanities in an age of science.

Perhaps we will even come up with answers to the question posed by Wilde in "The Garden of Eros"

What profit if this scientific age

Burst through our gates with all its
retinue

Of modern miracles! Can it assuage
One lover's breaking heart? What
can it do

To make one life more beautiful, one
day

More godlike in its period? . . .

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Comparative Approach to Literature

Too often those of us who teach English literature fail to develop the latent talent for criticism and comparison that our students—at least the better ones—have. In undergraduate courses which require the teaching of five or six authors in a semester, we tend to turn away from each writer with an air of finality. Our students are apt, therefore, to assume that they may safely relegate their newly gained knowledge to whatever brain lobes file information that can remain in the unconscious until later—the day of the final examination.

I pondered this problem as I prepared last semester to teach a course that was new to me: English 123. *Chief Modern English Writers*. Conrad, Eliot, Joyce, Lawrence, Forster, Shaw, Yeats, and others. The "others" we found no time to investigate because our comparative and critical approach to the named writers proved so fruitful in the tracing of themes and their various treatments that time ran out. But I believe that those students who read the "others" outside the confining time limit of the semester will have a broader criteria for understanding, criticism, comparison, and enjoyment than would have been possible had the course been taught in the usual manner.

The comparative and critical approach was possible without sacrificing the attention to detail that each author merited. For instance, after reading and discussing Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, I gave a test in which the students had an opportunity to show their knowledge of the background of industrialism against which the emotionally torn Morels tortuously wandered on the labyrinthine path imposed by their own limitations and of the complex interplay of the characters' emotions. Then we studied Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This book was the basis for an equally detailed test.

Instead, however, of going on to another work, we paused for two days to discuss these two books together. Each contains as central figure a young man in conflict with his environment. Each is deeply concerned with the problems of art. Each presents family ties that hold the hero. Each work is a lightly disguised autobiography. Thus we could discuss the difference in the personalities of these two men, one of whom became his own master and the other of whom we must conclude was mastered by his limitations. Of course, in my lectures, I went beyond the limits of the two novels to discuss what happened to the two authors in their adulthood and what each accomplished.

By way of another example, we studied Eliot's *The Wasteland* and Huxley's *Antic Hay*, giving each the same kind of detailed treatment. That *Antic Hay* satirically presents a picture of the aridity of modern life that is symbolically defined in *The Wasteland* is a point that might easily

have been missed by many students had we not paused to discuss in detail the implications of each work in relation to the other.

As the weeks of the semester passed, each book that we finished provided background against which to study those that followed. Consequently, when final examination day arrived, I was able to give the following test with some confidence that I would get aptly selected essays with their theses sustained by solid arguments. Note that I define the word *theme* for the benefit of those few students who would have asked me the meaning of a word that we had used dozens of times in class.

FINAL EXAMINATION—ENGLISH 123
theme: the subject of discourse, discussion, conversation, meditation, or composition; a topic

—The Oxford Universal Dictionary

Select two themes which you find important in the works that we have studied in this course. Write a well-organized essay about each, using specific references to three, and only three, of the works to sustain your arguments. You may use different works in each essay, or you may duplicate two of them.

Write each essay as though it were a separate question, although you may make references from one to the other if you wish.

I limited each essay to three works because the examination period lasted only two hours and I wanted the essays to have depth rather than breadth.

The examination papers were, on the whole, gratifying. Here are some of the pairs of topics that the students elected to write about:

- The sterility of life in the twentieth century.
 The struggle of man to overcome his environment.
- What does the future hold for man?
 Is the human mind capable of overcoming early childhood impressions?
- The conflict between man's environment and his maturing intellect.
 The sterility of modern man.
- Man's search for self realization.
 Women, the stronger sex, are the pursuers of men.
- The class struggle.
 "... only connect." (a phrase from Forster's *Howard's End*)
- Should we look for the right way of life in the future or the past?
 How character is formed.

These topics, selected by the students themselves, indicate that they have discovered the relation between literature and life that is the essence of humanism. I believe that when books are taught as part of the continuing stream of literature rather than as separate units, this relationship becomes more readily apparent.

IRVING D. BLUM
 University of Illinois at Chicago

NOTICES OF NOTE

The Test Development Division of Educational Testing Service is offering two Visiting Associateships for the summer of 1961. The basic stipend is \$800, plus transportation costs of the Associate and additional allotments up to \$300 for dependents. Completed applications must be submitted by March 17, 1961. Applications may be obtained from Mrs. Howard R. Lane, Test Development Division, Educational Test Service, 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, New Jersey.

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The list of contributing authors includes David Daiches, Howard Mumford Jones, Sloan Wilson, Robert Bendiner, Harold Taylor, David Riesman, Jacques Barzun, Joseph Wood Krutch, Arthur Miller, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Margaret Mead, Albert Schweitzer, Brendan Behan, Tom Mboya, and Henry Steele Commager. Each selection is prefaced by a brief headnote about the author and concludes with a useful list of suggested topics for writing and discussion.

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Regional Exchange

The 1960 Eagles gathered for the annual regional breakfast on 28 December at Stouffer's Restaurant in Philadelphia. A panel of four regional representatives discussed the topic "The Regional Responsibility in 1961."

First, James T. Barrs (Northeastern University), a member of the Committee on Regional Activity and Development, reported a survey he conducted at two New England CEA meetings which revealed that only about 22% of those attending the regional meetings held national membership. In approaching this problem he composed a one-page letter to the 78%, personalized by hand addressed envelopes and a memo on many of the letters. The effect of this individual effort should be interesting for application in other regionals.

Next, Charles Clarke (American University), past president of the Middle Atlantic CEA, pointed out that their regional can be described as a heterogeneous group containing a wide variety of institutions. He feels that a central function of CEA in this area is to bring such a heterogeneous group together for an exchange of ideas. He also identified a pressing need of the CEA to have a clear self-identity that separates it from other organizations.

The third panelist, Joseph M. Doggett (University of Houston), said that in the five-state South Central CEA the major problem is that of distance, preventing more than one meeting a year. To provide a connecting link in this regional, a newsletter, "The Round Table," was established last year. For the coming year four issues instead of three are planned. The subscription price is included in the annual dues of \$1.00. Doggett seconded the hope

that a clearer identification of CEA can be made and suggested that it would be valuable for national officers to attend as many regional meetings as possible.

The final panelist, Ed Hirshberg (University of South Florida), for years a mainstay in the Virginia-North Carolina regional, reported that the close association of that regional with the national was achieved in two ways: one, there was always a national officer at the regional meetings; two, national literature was always distributed at these meetings. When a representative of the regional was nominated for national office he received the strong backing of the regional because many were also national, therefore voting, members. Hirshberg said that the prospect was bright for a promising and flourishing new regional in Florida and spoke in favor of a package deal on payment of national and regional dues at the same time.



President Harry Moore and past president John Ciardi at the annual CEA dinner, Philadelphia. Moore acted as master of ceremonies in introducing speakers Donald Lloyd and John Ciardi. Full reports of the open meeting and of the dinner meeting will appear in later issues.

In the brisk discussion which followed, the CEA president-elect Harry T. Moore (Southern Illinois) expressed his feeling that the package deal for dues should be carefully explored by the executive officers. He also stressed the merit of the personal approach used by Barrs in New England.

Dick Bowman (Cooper Union), president of the Greater New York CEA, hoped that all regional secretaries would exchange copies of their programs and plans so that ideas could be shared across the nation. John Hicks, Executive Secretary, pointed to an expanded use of *The CEA Critic* for regional news and reports. He also asked for the opinion of the regionals on the idea of building up at the national office a library of significant tapes made at both national and regional meetings. These tapes could be made available to members or regional groups at a nominal cost.

Henry Adams (U. S. Naval Academy), Middle-Atlantic CEA, suggested that a fall newsletter containing national developments should be sent to all regional officers. This newsletter should cover activities planned on the national scene, projected ideas of national concern, and na-

tional interests suitable for regional program planning.

In addition to those named above, the eagles included: R. G. Bozorth, U. of Pennsylvania; William J. Griffin, George Peabody College; Irving D. Blum, Univ. of Illinois at Chicago; Donald J. Lloyd, Wayne State University; John Ball, Michigan State; Donald Sears, Upsala; Eva Weir, Idaho State; Martha C. Stone, University of Maryland; Lee Holt, American International; Cyrus Hoy, Vanderbilt; Eugene E. Slaughter, Southeastern Oklahoma; Maxwell H. Goldberg, University of Massachusetts; Alice R. Bensen, Eastern Michigan University; Harry M. Campbell, Oklahoma State University; Allen Blow Cook, U. S. Naval Academy; Allan H. MacLaine, Texas Christian University; William D. Templeman, University of Southern California.

PAT HOGAN

NOTICES OF NOTE

Have you been wondering lately what to do with accumulated examination copies of texts? A worthy outlet for those books you are no longer using is provided by the Asia Foundation. For the past six years it has sponsored a Books for Asian Students Program to provide Asian faculties, students, and libraries with needed books and journals. In this period, over 1½ million books and more than a ¼ million journals have been sent. The program is in need of college books in good condition, published after 1945, as well as works by standard authors. Scholarly journals in runs of five years or more are also desired.

The Asia Foundation will pay transportation costs from the donor to San Francisco and thence to Asia. For further details, write Carlton Lowenberg, Chief, Book Program, Books for Asian Students, 21 Drumm Street, San Francisco 11, Calif.

The problem of continuity in the English program was highlighted last October at the Ohio State campus when Dr. J. N. Hook spoke to the second annual convention of the English Association of Ohio. He stated that the typical English curriculum from the first grade to the freshman year in college is a "hash" rather than an intelligently planned diet. Dr. Hook suggested these reasons for the chaos: (1) the American system of local control over the schools, (2) individual differences in ability among students, and (3) the lack of general agreement as to what English instruction should include. At present, Dr. Hook stated, the English teacher must teach everything from brushing the teeth to choosing a profession.

Dr. Hook recommended certain corrective measures, including a careful determination of what the average student can accomplish in English at each grade level. He also recommended carefully coordinated and sequential programs in reading and writing, and a common exposure of all students to carefully selected works of literature by the end of the twelfth grade.

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ENGLISH FOR CRETINS

(Continued from page 1)

urbs, and "make money some day, son." This story was a profound shock. It is noteworthy that I found the story fascinating because it tore down everything I believed in. I found iconoclasm of this type delightful, and I still remember feeling a fantastic admiration for a man, such as Lawrence, who could thumb his nose at these things which were so ingrained. It almost seemed like he were defying God himself.

I remember several authors who prodded me out of the oatmeal nothingness of my thinking. I shall group three of them together because their influences were similar. They are A. E. Housman, John Donne, and Francois Rabelais. Quite a mixture! However, they had one thing in common: they treated of—nay, they exalted—things which I had been taught were not quite above board, not spoken of in polite company, not even allowed to flit idly through the mind. John Donne, for instance: Here was a man who was a minister, and who wrote a poem called "To His Mistress Going To Bed." Not only did this man casually mention some of those things which were taking place in my own mind, HE SHAMELESSLY REVELED IN THEM! You cannot imagine the extreme delight occasioned by that empty pedestal. Minister . . . mistress . . . bed . . . it was too much to take. I remember reading this particular poem and a number of others and being somewhat conscious that there was a reverent tone to this man's treatment of sex. In high school health classes and retreats and such, various of the brethren had paid lip service to the beauty of "marital privilege," but I don't remember ever believing in their sincerity. Donne's treatment was something entirely different. It was a wonder-

ful bit of light in the recesses of my tiny brain.

It hardly seems necessary to say anything about Rabelais. I remember, after reading passages of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, screaming with laughter in a fit of delight, freedom, expiation, and delicious vulgarity. Here was a man (an adult and another clergyman) who spoke the language and thought the thoughts that I and my contemporaries had been keeping secret from the adult world since the age of five. Here was the magnificent and unrestricted world which exists in the mind of every child until he is gradually undermined by his parents and teachers and enters the pompous ranks of the adult world, pretending to his children that he is above reproach. Rabelais was delightful. After reading him I felt less guilty about some of the words I was familiar with and some of the hilarious notions which entered my mind. The key to my interest in literature, or more correctly, the beginning of my interest in literature, lies in the fact that reading and understanding these people freed my mind.

Another key to my beginning interest in literature was its appeal to my sense of pedantry. To be able to read and understand something as forbidding as, say, Eliot's "Prufrock" is an immense accomplishment for an eighteen year old. It places him head and shoulders above the crowd. This is the way I felt after explanations of Joyce's stories and Eliot's poems had been doled out by the professor. This is decidedly not a good thing, but the pedantry and pride do not usually last, and it is a fine incentive to keep learning about literature. At this point I am not too sure that Eliot wasn't as much the pedant when he wrote things like "Prufrock" as I was when I first read them. I think that "The Naming of Cats" is his finest poem and as far as I am concerned he can pack up his obscurities and move back with them to Kansas City where he started out. But . . . At any rate, making pedants out of idiots is one way of teaching them literature.

I neglected to mention the influence of Housman. There are certain poems in *The Shropshire Lad*, such as the one which states: "Ale does more than Milton can, to justify God's ways to man," which influenced me in much the same way as Rabelais. In the first semester of Freshman year, when evenings at the pubs on the road are an integral part of the over-all plan, Housman's *Shropshire drinking poems* strike a new and familiar chord. His descriptions of falling deliriously asleep, heavy with grog and slightly sick, are appealing because this is how you feel every Friday night when you've managed to successfully elude the Dean of Men and you've made it back to the sack.

I think this welter of biography and reminiscence points out several interesting things. The students you will begin with are completely free of any previous notions about literature. They are clean slates.

Although they know nothing about nothing, you have the distinct advantage of dealing with fresh recruits. They have an awe and a reverence for college professors and they will take the word of almost anyone in authority as the absolute truth. Most important, they are not jaded—shallow, yes—filled with middle class notions about making money and being a hero, yes, but they don't think they are smarter than you or that nothing is worth a damn. There are two ways in which literature will appeal to them: (1) If it shocks them and delights them by attacking some of the absurd props which they cling to; and (2) If it appeals to their sense of pedantry and swells their heads so out of proportion that they feel a compulsion to rise above their inferior fellows by accumulating more and more facts, quotations, explanations, titles and names that they can drop into their conversations.

I can make very few suggestions as to specific pieces of literature to be treated. I can state generally, however, that the more iconoclasts you have them read, the more you shock them out of routine thinking, the better results you will have. These kids are by no means stupid—their difficulty lies in the fact that they can't think. You have to set up giant conflicts in their minds so that the wheels will begin to turn. Far back in their heads, they know what is true and what is just and what is real. But many of the things which they have been taught by a materialistic society, well-meaning parents, and a social code which stresses "group-think" confuse them. Their world is very small and very restricted and much of it is built on pretty soggy foundations. What you have to do in the beginning is attack the poorly-founded notions so that they begin to fight their way out of the confusion and are forced to begin

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recidivism

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
HOW IS IT PRONOUNCED?
WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

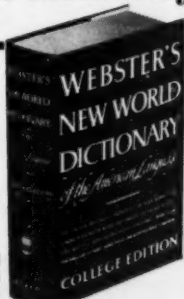
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Seminar on the Creative Process

At the first meeting of a senior seminar on "The Creative Process," I asked the twelve students to list the questions they might ask about the process of creating a work of literature. One question was, "What's the point of studying the creative process, anyway?" The question was valid, of course.

After thinking for a moment, I found several answers, some of them rather obvious. One was that a good way to study an art such as literature is to examine how it is produced, for seeing how an artist creates his work can help us understand and appreciate that work better. Perhaps a more important answer was that in this class the students were not going to "study" the creative process so much as to explore it, asking questions perhaps without expecting to find any answers; I pointed out to the group that no one really understands the process of literary creation, not even writers themselves, and that all I could do was simply supervise, suggesting areas to explore and methods of investigation. I indicated that I would, in fact, be "exploring" just as much as they.

One possible source of failure in a seminar is the students' feeling that they are being sent to find out about material that the teacher already knows thoroughly; in that case, the teacher seems coy or nasty in holding out on the student. I believe that in this course the students came to feel that they were actually on their own, that they were exercising their intellectual curiosity, and that the instructor was there to help them rather than to dictate to them and test them.

Now I should like to explain the actual work of the term. After defining the creative process broadly (and loosely) as the whole business of producing a piece of imaginative literature, good or bad, I tried to define briefly the nature of the course. It was to be a combination of aesthetics, criticism, and psychology, and a writing clinic with some practice in research. The students seemed somewhat puzzled, but at least a little intrigued.

Next, after warning the class that we would be concerned with the "how," rather than the "why" of literary creation, I asked for questions about the process, as I've said above—any questions, in any order. I hoped to stimulate their intellectual curiosity, a faculty perhaps too generally atrophied in American undergraduates, and simply to start them thinking seriously about where we might go in our explorations. When the flow of questions trickled out, we had compiled perhaps thirty. Here is a sampling, arranged according to the heading under which they seemed to fall when I correlated them later:

● The Artist: Is his creativity limited or directed?

What is the relationship, if any, between his motivation and his methods?

● The Inspiration, germ, seed: What is inspiration?

What is the start of the creative process; is it the plot or the mood, the theme or the subject?

● The Process itself: How much of the process is "creation," how much acquired technique?

What are the roles of objective analysis, of emotion, of imagination in the process?

This list at least helped us to start our investigations; later, I told the students, I would ask them to choose one or more topics for research papers. In the meantime we would try an experiment that might help us to focus and define our questions, and perhaps partially to answer some of them. Each student was to take a short story, poem, or one-act play that he had written recently, and try to remember and analyze the process he had gone through in creating it. If he had written nothing imaginative lately, he was to write something now, and when it was done, look back and analyze how he had done it. The students again had misgivings. How could they, in the second case, create with one mind and analyze with the other? And in either case, could a writer analyze his own creative process? They finally agreed to try.

For the next month or so, we listened to stories and poems, and very occasionally, plays, each followed by the writer's attempt to recount how he had produced the piece. These analyses were at first too vague, because the students couldn't clearly perceive what went into their writing. But I encouraged the other students to press for more detailed information, and in response the writers intensified their analyses.

Eventually, as we heard various analyses, we found that they led naturally to discussion of certain persistent problems that seemed to concern the creative process in general. Most of these we were able to recognize as questions we had listed at the start of the course; some were boiled down into new questions for the list. At this stage the class's investigation was continually focused on the most persistent and puzzling aspects of our subject. The students learned something about their own methods of writing, and about the nature and dimensions of the problems involved in finding out about the creative process.

Before the next stage in the course, the students were required to turn in the bibliographies on which they had been working. To the various students, I had assigned different areas, such as aesthetics, biography, and literary history, and had told them to compile from the material within those areas a list of books and articles relevant to the creative process. After correlating these lists to produce a working bibliography for the class, I started the students on their first major research projects, the investigation of some of the questions on the preliminary lists.

The next stage of the course consisted of a microscopic examination of the manuscript of some ten stanzas of Keats' "Eve of Saint Agnes" and of Spender's "Express," trying to see how the poets worked out their ideas. Most of the students found this kind of analysis difficult. They were not practised in it, and couldn't easily remember the technical devices that poets might use. For example, they would forget that Keats was rhyming "The Eve of Saint Agnes," or would overlook the various consequences of the "Queen" simile in "The Express." Gradually, however, the students' guesses, as they put it, became more informed and came more easily. Several students said later that this analysis certainly rid them of the notion that poems simply wrote themselves.

After we had spent about two weeks on the manuscripts, the papers on the general questions about the creative process were due. Although the students had evidently been interested in their topics, and had amassed much information about them, they had found the research very frustrating; they couldn't find out what inspiration was, nor how much a writer is influenced by his environment. I had to remind them that they shouldn't really have expected any solid answers to their questions since too little is known about the whole creative process.

The students next turned in some relief to their term papers, a study of the creative methods of a single author. Some focused their efforts on a single novel, by Thomas Wolfe, for instance, while others covered many works, such as the lyrics of A. E. Housman. The principal danger the students ran into was the tendency to write simple biography, though even that type of paper was at least peripherally related to our general topic. On the whole,

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I was very pleased with the papers; the investigations had evidently caught the students' interest, perhaps by providing a new approach to literature.

While the class worked on their term papers, we tackled a text-book in class. I had chosen Miss Phyllis Bartlett's *Poems in Process* (New York, 1951) from among very few possibilities. No text was available, unfortunately, that dealt with fiction and drama as well as poetry, but Miss Bartlett's book served our purpose fairly well. It provided a good deal of new, specific information about the way various poets' minds worked. By crystallizing or reinforcing many of the impressions that the students themselves had formed during the term, it pulled the material of the course together at the end. I nevertheless wish now that we had, instead, spent the time scrutinizing various writers' workbooks to learn more about the steps in the creative process that precede the actual writing, especially since the purpose of a seminar is to lead the students to find out, at first hand, if possible, for themselves.

This seminar, primarily by the very nature of its subject, I believe, fulfilled that purpose, and gave me the teacher's greatest satisfaction, that of seeing students broaden their understanding in response to new information. As a result of their exploration, most of them were somewhat disillusioned; they discovered that artistic creation was not an automatic result of inspiration for a "great" writer, but that it was largely hard work. They came to appreciate more the artistry of literature, and at the same time, began to realize that imaginative writing was not only for the inspired few, but could be undertaken even by themselves. In other words, they were stimulated to write. This effect

should make the course a valuable adjunct to a creative writing program.

More than that, the course might provide the students with a new approach to the literature they study in other courses. They might, for instance, be less inclined to regard *Paradise Lost* as an inscrutable monolith, and—since whatever is, is right—to simply read and revere it. Rather they might begin to wonder just how Milton wrote it as he did. Finally, the kind of intellectual curiosity that the subject of this seminar helps to arouse might even carry over into the education that we always hope the students will pursue for the rest of their lives.

JAMES L. FOTTER
Trinity College

NOTICES OF NOTE

Harper and Brothers—like the CEA—believes that many faculty members are creative writers. In order to ferret out these faculty writers, Harper's has set aside twenty-five \$100 options to be awarded to college faculty members who submit outstanding fiction or nonfiction. The \$100 is not returnable but will constitute part of whatever sum may be later agreed on as an advance against royalties. The only obligation is that the recipient will give Harper's first chance at the finished manuscript.

Educational television comes of age next month when an aircraft will take off from an airport in Indiana to begin telecasting to 5,000,000 students in 1300 colleges and universities in the Midwest area. Thus the Midwest Program on Airborne Television will commence experimentally in February, 1961. A full academic year of televised instruction will begin in September and continue until June, 1962.

Letters To The Editor

Sir:

Having read the stimulating article "Why Every Teacher Should Be an Actor" (*The CEA Critic*, Nov. 1960, pp. 6-7), I realized what was wrong with my teaching in former years. I simply was not a good enough actor. I had tried with every adjustment of the microscope known to man to be a good teacher and an even finer actor. But whether it was from thinking too precisely on the art, or from seeing the air too much, or imitating Stanislavski so abominably, I always failed. One day while reading an organ-toned passage from Milton to my class, I sheepishly discovered a cypher in my diapason. It was humiliating. I had neither the voice nor the training for such grand excursions. But I tried again and again and again. Once while reading Fluellen's part in *Henry V*, and I might add in my best imitation of Welsh, I splattered my sibilants all over the first row of students, managing even to out-Evans Maurice, the splendid spitter. Something told me I had not been born in a trunk.

In my salad days I had read all the "How To" books on acting and now tried to put their theories into practice. Attempting to insinuate myself into the very souls of my students, I wore a vizard to my heart and read *Macbeth*. The disappointing result was that I made the foul fair. Then I tried to infect my lovesick coeds with a reading of "How Do I Love Thee" and succeeded in making the fair foul. "Don't call us, we'll call you," one of my students hissed. Oh, the pity of it! To be racked and pressed (la peine forte et dure) before a live audience! I was so bethumped with jeering words that I determined, dear friend, to sail once more into the breach. Was I not "un grand inspirateur"? Was not a great teacher a great actor? He was, I was, and so—I tried the lighter *Peter Pan* (by Mary Martin, I think). I am convinced that success comes in time to every man. "Sheer plod" I think the poet said. And I was eminently successful. I was infected. I danced, I sang in my Joycean tenor voice, I pirouetted, gestured, grimaced at the proper places, I communicated as though electronically the joy and enthusiasm of my art. And like a dervish caught in a Yeatsian gyre, I flew out the classroom window and glided across the river and into the trees.

Now that I am Mad Sweeney flitting among the nightingales, I have time to reflect on my teaching life. I think I would do it all over again, differently. I would have heeded my Gilson who said that learning is an artificial act, not a natural one; that it involves the almost impossible task of communicating, not simply ideas, but the orderly arrangement of my ideas; that it is as much the responsibility of the educatee to be educated as it is the educator's to educate. All the world's a stage. Yes. But teaching is a twice-told tale vexing the dull ears of drowsy students, and signifying everything.

JOHN J. MURRAY
University of Scranton

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Diagraming is like poison. It has the power to produce many unfortunate conditions: the range of its disastrous results may extend from a mild numbing mental effect to a total destruction of the brain centers devoted to thought about language. The injuries it occasions vary with the mode of introduction into the human system, with the quantity deposited within a given period of time, and with the age and general language health of the victim. Like other poisonings its common symptoms are headache, dizziness, fright, nausea, pain, and subnormal language production, although on occasion the manifestation of its influence may be an emotional outburst akin to that produced by some stimulants (See R. B. Long, "Linguistics and Diagramming," *The CEA Critic*, October, 1960). The antidote for this poison is mental lavage. The administration of brain cleansers is best accomplished by one who knows that

language is a production and who encourages the victim to use speech and writing cheerfully, effortlessly, efficiently. Only those who like Mithridates take poison purposefully should handle this dangerous agent.

HARRY R. WARFEL
University of Florida

ELECTION RESULTS

At the Annual Meeting and dinner, held in the Crystal Room of the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, announcement was made of the election of officers for 1961: **President**, Harry T. Moore (See story elsewhere in this issue); **2nd Vice President**, Charles M. Clark; **Directors**, Bruce Dearing, Allan H. MacLaine, and Earle G. Eley; **Nominating Committee**, Donald Lloyd, Richard Bowman, and Ed Hirschberg. John Ball became 1st Vice President.

ENGLISH FOR CRETINS

(Continued from page 5)

thinking as individuals. They are also tremendously proud. They like to think they are immensely intelligent. If you confront them with one of Joyce's stories or one of Eliot's poems, you make them realize they are not so brilliant. Then if you feed them an explanation, they will try to regain their lost intelligence by seeking more and more explanations to obscure poems and stories.

These kids will find scepticism and iconoclasm entirely new things. They will find that to doubt and even to defy are not wrong, and they will be delighted, as I was, at the new freedom that this can give them. Some of the notions that you should choose pieces specifically to destroy are: (1) That sex is somehow wrong and that to deliberately delight in it indicates weakness of character; (2) That war is good, often fun, and that men at war are supposed at all times to be heroes. Some of Hemingway's stories are effective in destroying this image and there is a satiric poem by Swift called "On The Death of a Great and Famous General" which I remember setting up a monumental confusion in my mind during Freshman English; (3) That scepticism is wrong—Lawrence's

poem "Snake" did a pretty good job of making me think about what I'd been taught previous to Freshman year. Also, *The Catcher in the Rye* was a revelation.

It has just occurred to me that an appeal to the sense of beauty is also significant. The thing I remember most about Donne's poems is their beauty and reverence. Some of Lawrence's poetry, which I used to devour in the library after we had read "Snake" in class, is very beautiful. This is to say nothing of Shakespeare's sonnets and other things. You might also impress upon them that a writer writes not only because he has an entertaining tale, but because he believes in something which his story conveys and it is this that he really wishes to say.

That's about all I can tell you. These are the things which made me begin devouring books and authors and paintings and ideas. Not that I've come very far, but at least I've begun.

JOSEPH P. GIBBINS
Fordham College '60

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